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INSTRUCTIONS,

BY

MAJOR-GENERAL

SIR JOHN MALCOLM, G.C.B. K.L.S.

TO

OFFICERS ACTING UNDER HIS ORDERS

IN

CENTRAL INDIA,

A. D. 1821.

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PREFACE.

THE Instructions now published were written for those acting under my authority, when I was charged with the Administration of Central India. They were first printed by order of the Supreme Government, and have been subsequently published as part of the Appendix to the "Memoir of Central India." The frequent solicitations I have received for copies of these Instructions, and deference to the recommendations of some friends, who think the more general dissemination of the opinions contained in them would be useful, have led to their separate publication. No alterations have been made, but a few notes are added for the information of such readers as are not familiar with Indian history.

INSTRUCTIONS.

THESE Instructions are grounded upon principles which it has been my constant effort to inculcate upon all officers acting under my orders; and, at a period when I am leaving Central* India (perhaps not to return), I feel it a duty I owe to them, to myself, and to the public service, to enter into a more full explanation of my sentiments upon the subject of our general and local rule, than could have been necessary under any other circumstances.

Almost all who, from knowledge and experience, have been capable of forming any

* Central India, so denominated from its comprising those provinces which, lying in the centre of India, may be said to extend from seventy-one to seventy-five degrees North latitude, and seventy-three to eighty East longitude. It comprehends all that extent of country which was known in the time of the Emperors of Delhi under the denomination of the Subah or Government of Malwa.—Vide *Memoir of Central India*, vol. i. p. 1.

judgment upon the question, are agreed that our power in India rests on the general opinion of the Natives of our comparative superiority in good faith, wisdom, and strength, to their own rulers. This important impression will be improved by the consideration we show to their habits, institutions, and religion,—by the moderation, temper, and kindness with which we conduct ourselves towards them; and injured by every act that offends their belief or superstition, that shows disregard or neglect of individuals or communities, or that evinces our having, with the arrogance of conquerors, forgotten those maxims by which this great empire has been established, and by which alone it can be preserved.

The want of union of the Natives appears one of the strongest foundations of our power; it has certainly contributed, beyond all others, to its establishment. But, when we trace this cause, we find it to have originated in the condition in which we found India, and the line we adopted towards its inhabitants: that it will continue to operate when the condition of that country is changed, and under any alteration in our course of proceedings, is more than can be assumed.

The similarity of the situation of the great proportion of the people of this continent now subject to our rule, will assuredly make them more accessible to common motives of action, which is the foundation of all union; and the absence of that necessity for conciliation, which changes have effected, will make us more likely to forget its importance. Our power has hitherto owed much to a contrast with misrule and oppression; but this strength we are daily losing:—we have also been indebted to an indefinite impression of our resources, originating in ignorance of their real extent; knowledge will bring this feeling to a reduced standard. We are supported by the good opinion of the lower and middling classes, to whom our government is indulgent; but it has received the rudest shocks from an impression that our system of rule is at variance with the permanent continuance of rank, authority, and distinction in any Native of India. This belief, which is not without foundation, is general to every class, and its action leaves but an anxious and feverish existence to all who enjoy station and high name;—the feeling which their condition excites, exposes those who have any portion of power

and independence, to the arts of the discontented, the turbulent, and the ambitious: this is a danger to our power, which must increase in the ratio of its extent, unless we can counteract its operation by a commensurate improvement of our administration.

Our greatest strength perhaps, and that which gives the fairest hopes of the duration of our rule over India, arises out of the singular construction of the frame of both the controlling and the executive Government. Patronage in all the branches of the local government of India is exercised under much limitation and check: favour effects less in this country, and competency more, than in any other scene of equal magnitude. There is an interminable field for individual exertion; and, though men high in station are almost absolute, (and the character of our rule requires they should be so,) there is, in that jealousy of such power which belongs to our native country, a very efficient shield against its abuse. This keeps men from being intoxicated with their short-lived authority; and the fundamental principles which discourage colonization prevent public servants taking root in the soil, and make

them proceed to the duties of government, as they would in other countries to the routine of an office, which employs their talents without agitating their personal feelings and interests, in any degree that can disturb or bias their judgment. This absence of baneful passions, and of all the arts of intrigue and ambition which destroy empires, produces a calmness of mind that can belong alone to the rulers of a country situated as the English employed in India now are, and gives them an advantage which almost balances the bad effects of their want of those national ties that usually constitute the strength of governments.

Our success and moderation, contrasted with the misrule and violence to which a great part of the population of India have for more than a century been exposed, have at this moment raised the reputation of the British nation so high, that men have forgotten, in the contemplation of the security and prosperity they enjoy under strangers, their feelings of patriotism; but these are feelings which that very knowledge that it is our duty to impart must gradually revive and bring into action. The people of India must, by a recurring sense of benefits, have

amends made them for the degradation of continuing subject to foreign masters; and this can alone be done by the combined efforts of every individual employed in a station of trust and responsibility, to render popular a government which, though not national, has its foundations laid deep on the principles of toleration, justice, and wisdom. Every agent of government should study and understand the above facts. He should not content himself with having acquired a knowledge of the languages, and of the customs, of those with whom he has intercourse. All his particular acts (even to the manner of them) should be regulated by recurrence to the foundation of our rule, and a careful observation of those principles by which it has been established and can alone be maintained. Of the importance of this I cannot better state my opinion, than by expressing my full conviction, that, independent of the prescribed duties which every qualified officer performs, there is no person in a situation of any consequence who does not, both in the substance and manner of his conduct, do something every day in his life, which, as it operates on the general interests of the empire through

the feelings of the circle he controls or rules, has an unseen effect in strengthening or weakening the government by which he is employed. My belief that what I have assumed is correct, will be my excuse for going into some minuteness in my general instructions to those under my orders.

The first, and one of the most important points, is the manner of European superiors towards the Natives. It would be quite out of place, in this paper, to speak of the necessity of kindness, and of an absence of all violence; this must be a matter of course with those to whom it is addressed: there is much more required from them than that conciliation which is a duty, but which, when it appears as such, loses half its effect. It must, to make an impression, be a habit of the mind, grounded on a favourable consideration of the qualities and merits of those to whom it extends; and this impression, I am satisfied, every person will have, who, after attaining a thorough knowledge of the real character of those with whom he has intercourse, shall judge them, without prejudice or self-conceit, by a standard which is suited to their belief, their usages, their habits, their occupations, their rank in

life, the ideas they have imbibed from infancy, and the stage of civilization to which the community as a whole are advanced. If he does so with that knowledge and that temper of mind which are essential to render him competent to form an opinion, he will find enough of virtue, enough of docility and disposition to improvement, enough of regard and observance of all the best and most sacred ties of society, to create an esteem for individuals, and an interest in the community, which, when grounded on a sincere conviction of its being deserved, will render his kindness natural and conciliating. All human beings, down to the lowest links of the chain, inclusive of children, are quick in tracing the source of the manners of others, and, above all, of their superiors:—when that is regulated by the head, not the heart—when it proceeds from reason, not from feeling, it cannot please; for it has in it, if at all artificial, a show of design which repels, as it generates suspicion. When this manner takes another shape, when kindness and consideration appear as acts of condescension, it must be felt as offensive. Men may dread, but can never love

or regard, those who are continually humiliating them by the parade of superiority.

I have recommended those foundations of manner, towards the Natives of India, upon which I feel my own to be grounded. I can recollect (and I do it with shame) the period when I thought I was very superior to those with whom my duty made me associate; but as my knowledge of them and of myself improved, the distance between us gradually lessened. I have seen and heard much of our boasted advantages over them, but cannot think that, if all the ranks of the different communities of Europe and India are comparatively viewed, there is just ground for any very arrogant feeling on the part of the inhabitants of the former: nor can I join in that common-place opinion, which condemns, in a sweeping way, the Natives of this country as men, taking the best of them, not only unworthy of trust and devoid of principle, but of too limited intelligence and reach of thought, to allow of Europeans, with large and liberal minds and education, having rational or satisfactory intercourse with them. Such impressions, if admitted, must prove vital as to the manner of treating

the Natives of India: I shall therefore say a few words upon the justice of the grounds upon which they rest. The man who considers them in this light can grant little or no credit to the high characters and the eulogies which are given to individuals and great bodies of men in their own histories, traditions, and records. He must then judge them by his own observations and knowledge, and his opinion will in all probability be formed, not comparatively with Europeans of their own class of life, but with the public servants of government—a class of men who are carefully educated, whose ambition is stimulated by the highest prospects of preferment, and whose integrity is preserved by adequate salaries through every grade of their service. Before this last principle was introduced (which is little more than thirty years), the European servants of government were in the habit of making money in modes not unsimilar to those we now reproach the Natives in our employ with doing; and it may here be asked, "if the same endeavours have been made to alter the habits of the latter as the former?" I believe the exact contrary to be the fact, and that the system since introduced has not operated more to elevate

the European, than to sink and depress the Native character: but this is not the place for the discussion of this large question.

Many of the moral defects of the Natives of India are to be referred to that misrule and oppression from which they are now in a great degree emancipated. I do not know the example of any great population, in similar circumstances, preserving, through such a period of change and tyrannical rule, so much of virtue and so many good qualities as are to be found in a great proportion of the inhabitants of this country. This is to be accounted for, in some degree, by the Hindu institutions, particularly that of Caste, which appear to have raised them to their present rank in human society, at a very remote period; but these have certainly tended to keep them stationary at that point of civil order to which they were thus early advanced. With a just admiration of the effects of many of their institutions, particularly those parts of them which cause in vast classes, not merely an absence of the common vices of theft, drunkenness, and violence, but preserve the virtuous ties of family and kindred relations, we must all deplore some of their usages and weak su-

perstitions; but what individuals, or what races of men, are without great and manifold errors and imperfections? and what mind, that is not fortified with ignorance or pride, can, on such grounds, come to a severe judgment against a people like that of India?

I must here, however, remark, that I have invariably found, unless in a few cases where knowledge had not overcome self-sufficiency and arrogance, that in proportion as European officers, civil and military, advanced in their acquaintance with the language and customs of the Natives of India, they became more sincerely kind to them; and, on the contrary, ignorance always accompanied that selfish pride and want of consideration which held them light, or treated them with harshness.

I am quite satisfied in my own mind, that, if there is one cause more than another that will impede our progress to the general improvement of India, it is a belief formed by its population, from the manner of their English superiors, that they are viewed by them as an inferior and degraded race: but, on the contrary, if the persons employed in every branch of the administration of this great country, while their conduct marks those

rigid principles of virtue and justice, under the check of which they act, comport themselves towards the people whom it is their duty to make happy, with that sincere humility of heart which always belongs to real knowledge, and which attaches while it elevates, they will contribute by such manner, more than any measures of boasted wisdom ever can, to the strength and duration of their government.

It is of importance, before I conclude this part of the subject, to state my opinion, that in our manner to the Natives, though it is our duty to understand and to pay every proper deference to their customs and usages, and to conform with these as far as we can with propriety, particularly on points where the religious prejudices or the rank of those with whom we have intercourse require it, yet we should always preserve the European; for, to adopt their manners is a departure from the very principle on which every impression of our superiority that rests upon good foundation is grounded. We should take a lesson on such points from what we see occur to Native princes and others, who ape English habits and modes: they lose ground with

one class, that to which they belong, without gaining with the other, that to which they wish to approximate. The fact is, they ultimately lose with the latter; for even their attachment is useless, when they cease to have influence with their own tribe. The European officer, who assumes Native manners and usages, may please a few individuals, who are flattered or profited by his departure from the habits of his country; but even with these, familiarity will not be found to increase respect; and the adoption of such a course will be sure to sink him in the estimation of the mass of the community, both European and Native, among whom he resides.

The intercourse to be maintained with the Natives within your circle is of two kinds, —private and official. The first should extend as much as possible to all ranks and classes, and be as familiar, as kind, and as frequent, as the difference of habits and pursuits will admit.

There is a veil between the Natives of India and their European superiors, which leaves the latter ignorant, in an extraordinary degree, of the real character of the former. He can only judge his own domestics by

what he sees of their conduct in his presence; of the manner in which they perform their other duties in life, he is, if not ignorant, but imperfectly informed: so many minute obstacles, grounded upon caste, usages, and religion, oppose an approach to closer acquaintance, that it can never be generally attained; but in private intercourse much may be learned that will facilitate the performance of public duty, and give that knowledge of the usages and feelings of the various classes of the Natives, which will enable its possessors to touch every chord with effect. In joining with them in field-sports, in an unceremonious interchange of visits with the most respectable, and in seeking the society of the most learned, the European public officer will not only gain much information, but impart complete confidence, and lay the grounds of that personal attachment which will ever be found of the greatest aid to his public labours. He will also obtain, by such habits of private intercourse, the means of elevating those he esteems by marks of notice and regard; but, in pursuing this course, he must beware lest he lose his object, by falling into the weaknesses or indulgences of

the persons with whom he thus associates. It is in the performance of this part of his duty, when all the pride of station is laid aside, that he must most carefully guard that real superiority which he derives from better knowledge and truer principles of morality and religion; for it is from the impression made by the possession, without the ostentation of those higher qualities, that he must expect the benefits I have described as likely to result from a familiar and private intercourse with the Natives under his direction and control.

In all official intercourse with the Natives, one of the first points of importance is, that these, whatever be their rank, class, or business, should have complete and easy access to personal communication with their European superior. The necessity of this arises out of the character of our rule, and of those over whom it is established. It is sufficiently galling for the people of India to have foreign masters: the impression this feeling must continually excite, can only be mitigated or removed by a recurring sense of the advantages they derive from the wisdom and justice of their European superiors; and this can alone be effected by direct communication

with them. Though Native servants must be employed and trusted, and though it is quite essential to behave to all with kindness, and to raise the higher classes of them by a treatment which combines consideration and respect, yet they can never without hazard be used as exclusive mediums of communication: their real or supposed influence will, under whatever circumstances they are allowed frequent approach to an European officer in the exercise of authority, give them opportunities of abusing his confidence, if they desire it; and as our servants, who are seldom selected from the higher classes, cannot be supposed to have even the same motives with Native rulers for good conduct, much less the same title to regard, men under our power will have, in aggravation of the feeling arising out of subjection to foreign rule, that of being, to a certain extent, at the mercy of persons of their own nation, whom they neither trust nor respect. There is no remedy for such an evil, except being completely easy of access; but this, however much the superior may desire it, is not to be established without difficulty and perseverance. It affects the interest and consequence of every man in his employ, from the

highest to the lowest; but, in proportion to their efforts to counteract it, so must his be to carry this important point, on which, more than all others, the integrity of his personal administration and the good of the country depend. No Native servant, high or low, must be allowed the privilege of either introducing or stopping an applicant or a complainant: all such must come with confidence to the European superior, or to such assistant as he may specifically direct to receive or hear them. It requires much temper and patience, constant activity, and no slight sacrifice of personal comfort, to maintain an intercourse with the Natives upon this footing; but, unless it be done, (I speak here from the fullest experience,) the government of control now established* in Central India cannot be carried on for any period, and the changes which must ensue from relaxation in

* In consequence of the success of the Pindarry war in A. D. 1818 and 1819, our power was established over almost all the country called Central India; but, with the exception of a few districts, its provinces remained with the Native princes and chiefs who before possessed them. These, with hardly what can be called an exception, became, under different treaties and engagements, dependent on the protection and subject to the control of the British government.

this particular will be brought about in the manner most unfavourable to our character and reputation.

In establishing this direct personal intercourse, it is perhaps better, when the habits are so formed as to admit of it, that the Natives of all classes and ranks should have admission and be heard, at whatever hour of the day they come, except those of meals; but, where such constant intrusion is found to interrupt other business, as it may with many, certain portions of every day must be set aside to hear representations and complaints, and to see those who desire to be seen. The establishment of direct intercourse is, in my opinion, a primary and indispensable duty,—one no more dependent upon the inclination or judgment of the individuals to whom the charge of managing or controlling these countries is entrusted, than it is to an officer whether he shall attend his parade, or to a judge whether he shall sit a certain number of hours in his court: indeed, I consider that late events have so completely altered our condition in India, that the duties of almost every officer in the political department have become, in a great degree, magis-

terial, and, as such, must be more defined, and subject to more exact rules, than they formerly were.

Our right of interference (as will be shown hereafter) is so limited, that it is not in one case in a hundred of those that are brought forward, that an officer can do more than state calmly and clearly, to the party who seeks redress, the reasons and principles which prevent him from attending to his representation or complaint. He will have to repeat this perhaps fifty times in one day; but he must, in contemplating the good that will be ultimately produced, be content to take this trouble. The Natives of India cannot persuade themselves that, possessing as we do the means of establishing our direct rule, we shall long refrain from doing so. This impression weakens those princes, chiefs, and ministers, whom it is our policy to support, in a degree that almost unfits them for being instruments of government. We can only counteract its bad effects by making ourselves understood by all, even to the lowest, upon this point: it is one on which they will never trust to a communication from any Native agent or servant, nor indeed will they be convinced of our sincerity till they observe

for years that our words and actions are in unison; and they must, to satisfy them that there is no prospect of those fluctuations to which they have been so habituated, see that every thing originates with and is known to the superior. This knowledge, added to the right of approaching him at all moments, will gradually tranquillize their minds, and place them, as far as they can be placed, beyond the power of being made the dupes of artful or interested men.

It has been before said, that Native servants of all classes should be treated with that attention and respect to which they were from their station and character entitled. These will, of course, have at all times the freest intercourse with the superior, but they should never have the privilege of coming to any conference between him and other Natives, to which they were not specifically called. But these servants (whatever might be their inclination) will have little power of doing harm when a direct intercourse (such as has been described) is well established, and its principles and objects generally understood. Indeed, one of the best effects of that intercourse is the check it constitutes on all nefarious proceedings of subordinate

agents, and persons of every description; as such must act in hourly dread of discovery, when every man can tell his own story to the principal at any moment he pleases.

The next important point to be observed in official intercourse with the Natives, is "publicity." There can be no occasion to expatiate, here, upon the utility of this principle. It is the happy privilege of a state so constituted as that of the English in India, to gain strength in the ratio that its measures, and the grounds on which they are adopted, are made public; and this is above all essential in a quarter of India where we are as yet but imperfectly understood. There are, and can be, no secrets in our ordinary proceedings, and every agent will find his means of doing good advanced, his toil lessened, and the power of the designing and corrupt to misrepresent his actions or intentions decreased, in the proportion that he transacts affairs in public. He should avoid, as much as he possibly can, private conferences with those in his employ or others. These will be eagerly sought for; they give the individual thus admitted the appearance of favour and influence; and there is no science in which the more artful among the Natives are greater

adepts, than that of turning to account the real or supposed confidence of their superiors. I know no mode of preventing the mischief which this impression, if it becomes general, gives men the power of effecting, but habitual publicity in transacting business. This will, no doubt, be found to have inconveniences, which will be purposely increased by those who have their game to play, and indeed others; for Natives of rank and station, even when they have no corrupt views, are from habit and self-importance attached to a secret and mysterious way of conducting both great and small affairs.

A public officer, placed in your situation, must always be vigilant and watchful of events likely to affect the peace of the country under his charge; but no part of his duty requires such care and wisdom in its performance. He cannot rest in blind confidence, nor refuse attention to obvious and well-authenticated facts; but he must be slow in giving his ear, or in admitting to private and confidential intercourse, secret agents and informers, lest they make an impression (which will be their object) upon his mind; for there is no failing of human nature to which the worst part of the Natives of

India have learned (from the shape of their own government) so well to address themselves, as any disposition to suspicion in their superiors. From the condition of Central India, abounding as it must with discontented and desperate characters, intrigues, treasonable conversations and papers, and immature plots, must, for some time, be matters of frequent occurrence and growth; but such will, in general, be best left to perish of neglect. Established as our power now is, men cannot collect any means capable of shaking it, without being discovered; and it is, I am convinced, under all ordinary circumstances, wiser and safer to incur petty hazard, than to place individuals and communities at the mercy of artful and avaricious agents and spies, or to goad unfortunate men to a state of hostility by continually viewing them with an eye of torturing and degrading suspicion.

In the intercourse with the Natives of your circle, it is hardly necessary to advert to the subject of giving and receiving presents. The recent orders upon this subject, which have been communicated to you, are very defined and strict; but there is a necessity, in this government of control, for every agent to maintain, on a high ground, not only the

purity, but the disinterestedness of the English character; and you will avoid, as much as you possibly can, incurring any obligation to local authorities. These will sedulously endeavour to promote your convenience and comfort, and will press favours upon you, both from design and good feelings; but there is a strength in preserving complete independence on all such points, that must not be abandoned. Our political superiority, to be efficient, must be unmixed with any motives or concerns, either connected with our personal interest or that of others, that can soil or weaken that impression on which its successful exercise depends.

The forms of the official intercourse between European agents and Natives of rank were, before we obtained paramount power, a matter of more moment, and one on which we could less relax than at present, because our motives were at that period more liable to be mistaken. Though it is essential, in our intercourse with nations who are attached to and give value to ceremonies, to understand such perfectly, and to claim from all what is due to our station, that we may not sink the rank of the European superior in the estimation of those subject

to his control; it is now the duty of the former to be much more attentive to the respect which he gives than what he receives, particularly in his intercourse with men of high rank. The princes and chiefs of India may, in different degrees, be said to be all dependent on the British government: many have little more than the name of that power they before enjoyed; but they seem, as they lose the substance, to cling to the forms of station. The pride of reason may smile at such a feeling; but it exists, and it would be alike opposite to the principles of humanity and policy to deny it gratification.

In official intercourse with the lower classes, the latter should be treated according to the usages of the country, as practised by the most indulgent of their Native superiors. It will be found that they require personal notice and consideration in proportion as their state is removed from that knowledge which belongs to civilization; and, it is on this ground that the Bheel* must have more attention paid him

* The Bheels are mountain-robbers. For a particular account of this remarkable race, vide *Memoir on Central India*, vol. i. pp. 116, 550, and vol. ii. p. 179.

than the Ryot. It is more difficult to give confidence to his mind, and to make him believe in the sincerity and permanence of the kindness with which he is treated, because he is in a condition more remote from the party with whom he communicates; and, before he can be reclaimed, he must be approximated.

The interference of agents employed in this country with Native princes, or courts, or their local officers, cannot be exactly defined, for there will be shades of distinction in every case, that will require attention; but all must be subject, and that in the strictest degree, to certain general and well-understood principles, founded on the nature of our power, our objects, our political relations with the different states, the personal conduct of their rulers, their necessity for our aid and support, and their disposition to require or reject it in the conduct of their internal administration. The leading principle, and the one which must be continually referred to, is grounded on the character of our controlling power and its objects. It is the avowed, and I am satisfied it is the true, policy of the British State, while it maintains the general peace

of the country, to keep, not only in the enjoyment of their high rank, but in the active exercise of their sovereign functions, the different princes and chiefs who are virtually or declaredly dependent on its protection. The principal object (setting aside the obligations of faith) is to keep at a distance that crisis to which, in spite of our efforts, we are gradually approaching—of having the whole of India subject to our direct rule. There is no intention of discussing here the consequences likely to result from such an event. It is sufficient for executive and subordinate officers to know, that it is the desire of the government they serve, to keep it at a distance, to render it their duty to contribute their whole efforts to promote the accomplishment of that object; and on the manner and substance of their interference the local success of this policy will greatly depend.

On all points where we are pledged by treaty to support states, or to mediate or interfere between them and others, we must of course act agreeably to the obligations contracted; and, in such case, no instructions can be required. It may not, however, be unuseful to remark, that, on all occasions

where they are referred to, treaties and engagements should be interpreted with consideration to the prince or chief with whom they are made. There is often, from opposite education and habits, much difference between their construction and ours of such engagements; but no loose observation, or even casual departure from the letter of them, ought to lead to serious consequences, when it appeared there was no intention of violating the spirit of the deed, or of acting contrary to pledged faith. When any article of an engagement is doubtful, I think it should be invariably explained with more leaning to the expectations originally raised in the weaker than to the interests of the stronger power. It belongs to superior authority to give ultimate judgment upon all points of this nature which come under discussion; but that judgment must always be much influenced by the colour of the information, and opinion of the local agent. My desire is to convey how important every subject is that connects in the remotest degree with that reputation for good faith, which can only be considered our strength while it exists unimpaired in the minds of the Natives: in this view the most scrupulous

attention should be paid to their understanding of every article of the agreements we make with them; for no local advantage, nor the promotion of any pecuniary interest, can compensate for the slightest injury to "this corner-stone of our power in India."

With the government of Dowlet Row Sindia* (a great part of whose possessions are intermixed with those of our dependent allies in this quarter) we have only general relations of amity; and, however virtually dependent events may have rendered that prince, we can (except insisting upon the exact performance of those settlements which we have mediated between him or his delegated officers and some of his tributaries) claim no right of interference in any part of his internal administration; nor should there, unless in cases of unexpected emergency which threatened the general peace of the country, be any disposition shown to interference, except on specific

* This Mahratta prince (for a particular account of whose family and possessions vide *Memoir on Central India*, vol. i. p. 116) is the only one who maintains a nominal independence of the British government; but he, in fact, now relies as much on that power as those chiefs who can claim its protection by treaty.

requisition from the resident at Gualior*. Without interfering, however, we have hitherto, and shall continue to exercise a very salutary control both over Dowlet Row Sindia and his local officers, by the terms on which we communicate and act with the latter. When these are men of good character, and study the happiness of the inhabitants and the improvement of the country, we can, by the cordiality and consideration with which we treat them, and the ready attention we give to the settlement of every petty dispute they have with the subjects of our allies, as well as other friendly acts, grant them a countenance and aid which will promote the success of their local administration. The same principle leads to abstinence from all communication, and to our keeping aloof (except where the general peace is at hazard) from all intercourse with those of Sindia's managers who are noted for misrule or bad faith. This line of conduct towards the latter, grounded, as it publicly should be, on the avowed principle of keeping our character free of soil from their proceedings, will in-

* Gualior is the capital of Dowlet Row Sindia, with whom a representative of the British government resides.

crease our local reputation, while it has the effect of rendering the employment of such men inconvenient and unprofitable to the state, and thus constitutes one of the chief means we have of working a reform in its internal administration: nor is it a slight one; for the impression of our power is so great, that the belief of a local officer possessing our good opinion and friendship, is of itself sufficient to repress opposition to his authority, while his forfeiting our favour is sure to raise him enemies, both in his district and at Gualior.

With the courts of Holkar*, Dhar, Dewass, and almost all the petty Rajpoot states West of the Chumbul, our relations are different. These have been raised from a weak and fallen condition, to one of efficiency, through our efforts. But, though compelled, at first, to aid them in almost every settlement, we have, as they attained the power of acting for themselves, gradually withdrawn from minute interference on points connected with

* For an account of the Mahratta families of Holkar, Dhar, and Dewass, vide *Memoir on Central India*, vol. i. pp. 142, 97, and 112. A detailed account of the Rajpoot chiefs here alluded to is given in p. 463 of the same volume.

their internal administration, limiting ourselves to what is necessary for the maintenance of the public tranquillity.

There is so strong a feeling in the minds of the princes and chiefs above alluded to, and in those of all their officers (from their prime minister down to the lowest agent), of their actual dependence upon the British government, that it is almost impossible to make them understand that they are, in the conduct of their internal administration, desired and expected to act independently of it. Their difficulty of comprehending and trusting the policy which dictates our conduct in this particular, arises out of its being opposite to all their habits and knowledge. Time alone, and the most minute care of every European agent employed, can impart to them that confidence which is essential to their becoming competent functionaries of rule. To effect this object, the principles hitherto inculcated and acted upon must be steadily pursued, and we must decline all interference, except in cases where Grassiahs*, Bheels, or other plunderers are con-

* The Grassiahs are Rajpoot chiefs, who subsist by extorting, through force or intimidation, a part of the produce of those

cerned. These, from their situation and strength, can only be kept in order by the power of the British government; but we must, in such cases even, have the limits of our interference exactly defined, that no belief may exist of our possessing the power of departing from the restrictions we have imposed upon ourselves; for on such impressions being general, and being confirmed by scrupulous consistency of action, depends our success in giving that efficiency to the various Native authorities subject to our control, which is necessary to enable them to perform the different duties allotted to them.

In cases of interference with lesser rulers, such as the reformed Rajpoot plunderers and Bheel chiefs, we may be compelled to enter more minutely into their affairs; but the principles observed should be the same; and while we take care to repress every disposition to a return to predatory habits, and see that men who have long cherished such, possess themselves of honest means of live-

districts they once possessed, but from which they have been expelled by Mahratta invaders. For a particular account of these chiefs, vide *Memoir on Central India*, vol. i. p. 508, and vol. ii. p. 244.

lihood, we must respect their prejudices, and not hastily break in upon the rude frame of their internal rule; but leave (down to the Turwee, or head of the Bheel Parah or cluster of hamlets) the full exercise of his authority over those under him, according as that is grounded on the ancient prejudices and usages of the tribe to which he and his family or followers belong.

The feelings of irritation and hatred with which almost all the princes and chiefs of this quarter regard the Grassiahs and Bheels, and the total want of confidence of the latter in their nominal superiors, have and will continue to render calls for our interference very frequent: but however high the character and condition of the one party, and however bad and low that of the other may be, we must never grant our name or support to measures of coercion or violence, without fully understanding the merits of the case, nor without having had direct communication with the party or parties inculpated; otherwise we may be involved in embarrassment, and become unconsciously the instruments of injustice and oppression.

Many questions will occur, deeply connected with our reputation for good faith,

which cannot be decided by any exact rules; but whenever that is concerned, the tone of our feeling should be very high. It is the point upon which the moral part of our government of this great empire hinges; and in these countries, where our rule and control are new, and in which the inhabitants cannot yet understand any explanations that do not rest upon broad and obvious grounds, the subject requires much attention. There are many cases in which our faith, though not specifically, is virtually pledged to individuals: ministers, for instance, of minor or incompetent princes or chiefs, who have been brought forward or recognized by us in the exercise of authority, have a claim upon our support and consideration, which nothing but bad conduct on their part can forfeit. We should, no doubt, be most careful of any interference that leads to such obligations. They are only to be incurred when a necessity that involves the peace and prosperity of the country calls for them: but they must be sacredly observed; for, with a people who look, in all questions of government, more to persons than systems, the abandonment, except from gross misconduct, of any individual who had

been raised or openly protected by us, would excite stronger feelings than the breach of an article of a treaty, and locally prove more injurious, as it weakens that reliance upon our faith which is the very foundation of our strength.

We may rest satisfied, while we pursue the course I have stated, (and it is the one to which our faith is almost in every case, either directly or by implication, pledged,) that we have, from our paramount power, a very efficient check over states and tribes, whose rulers, officers, and chiefs will soon discover that they can only gain our favour and support by good conduct, or forfeit it by bad. With such knowledge and with means comparatively limited, we cannot expect they will be disposed to incur displeasure, when the terms on which they can gain approbation are so easy; at least no men possessed of common sense and discernment (qualities in which the Natives of India are seldom deficient) can be expected to act in such a manner; but we must not conceal from ourselves, that their conduct in this, as in all other particulars, will rest chiefly on the value of that condition in which they are placed, or rather left; and

in proportion as we render it one of comfort and dignity, so will their care be to preserve our good opinion and to merit our confidence. It is, indeed, upon our success in supporting their respectability, that the permanence of a system of control over great and small Native states, such as we have established in this quarter of India, will depend. We have no choice of means in the performance of this delicate and arduous part of our duty. Though the check must be efficient, it should be almost unseen: the effect ought to be produced more by the impression than the exercise of superior power. Our principal object must be to elevate the authorities to whom we have left the administration of their respective territories; we must, in all cases of interference, bring them forward to their own subjects, as the prominent objects of respect and obedience; so far from the agent attracting notice to himself, he should purposely repel it, that it may be given to the quarter where it is wanted, and to which it belongs.

When we aid any prince or chief against his own subjects, his name should be exclusively used; and we should be most careful in making our Native agents and servants pay

the full measure of respect to every branch of his administration, and continually be on the watch to check that disposition which is inherent in them, to slight local authorities, that they may, in the name of their master, draw that attention to themselves, which it is quite essential should belong to the officers of the Native government. It is evident that our control can only be supportable, to any human being who has the name and appearance of power, so long as it is exercised in a general manner, and regulated by the principles above stated. When it descends to minute checks and interference in the collection of revenue, the administration of justice, listens to the complaints of discontented, or even aggrieved individuals, and allows, upon system, its own Native agents to interfere and act in the name of the paramount state; the continuance of independent power, in any shape, to either prince or chief, is not only impolitic but dangerous, as his condition must be felt by himself, and by all attached to his person or family, as a mockery and degradation; and the least effect of such feelings will be the extermination of all motive to good or great actions. For when control is divested of its large and

liberal character, and takes a more minute shape, whatever merit belongs to the administration becomes the due of the person by whom it is exercised, or his agents, and the nominal prince and his officers are degraded into suspected and incompetent instruments of rule.

In this general outline of our interference with the rulers, great and small, of this part of India, I have dwelt much upon the political considerations upon which it is grounded; because I am convinced, that there is no part of the subject that requires to be so deeply studied and so fully understood, as this should be, by every subordinate agent; for there is no point of his duty which is at once so delicate and arduous, or in which success or failure so much depends upon individual exertion. He will be prompted to deviate from the course prescribed, by the action of his best feelings, and by hopes of increasing his personal reputation; but he will be kept steady in that course by a knowledge of the importance of those general principles on which the present system rests. It is in the performance of this part of his duty, that all which has been said regarding manner and intercourse must be in his me-

mory; for men in the situation in which those are, with whom he must in all cases of interference come in contact, are not to be conciliated to their condition, nor kept in that temper with the paramount authority which it is necessary for its interest they should be, by mere correctness or strict attention to justice. The Native governments must be courted and encouraged to good conduct, and the earnest endeavour of the British agent must be, to give their rulers a pride in their administration: to effect this object, he must win to his side, not only the rulers themselves, but the principal and most respectable men of the country. In his efforts to gain the latter, however, he must beware of depriving the local authority of that public opinion which is so essential both as a check to misrule and a reward to good government, but which would cease to be felt as either, the moment the ties between prince and subject were seriously injured or broken.

Where the public peace, of which we are the avowed protectors, has been violated, or where murders or robberies have been committed, we have a right to urge the local authorities (whom we aid with the means both for the prevention and punishment of such

crimes) to pursue, according to their own usages, the course best calculated to preserve the safety of persons and of property. In other cases connected with the administration of justice, though there is no right of interference, it will be for their interest, and for our reputation, to lose no opportunity of impressing generally the benefit and good name that will result from attention to ancient institutions, particularly to that of the popular courts of Punchayet, which have never been discontinued, but in periods marked by anarchy and oppression.

The practice of Suttee* is not frequent in Malwa, and that of infanticide is, I believe, less so. The first is a usage, which, however shocking to humanity, has defenders among every class of the Hindu community. The latter is held in abhorrence by all but the Rajpoot families, by whom it is practised, and to whom it is confined; yet many of the most respectable chiefs of that tribe speak of this crime with all the horror it merits. You cannot interfere in the prevention of either of these sacrifices, beyond the exercise of that influence which you possess from

* Suttee is a Hindu term for the self-sacrifice of a female at the funeral-pile of her husband.

personal character; indeed, to attempt more, would be at the hazard of making wrong impressions, and of defeating the end you desired to attain. Praise of those who abstain from such acts, and neglect of those who approve or perpetrate them, is the best remedy that can be applied. It is the course I have pursued, and has certainly been attended with success.

That the line of interference which has been described is difficult, will not be denied; but what course can we discover for the future rule and control of the different Native states in India, which does not present a choice of difficulties? Men are too apt, at the first view of this great subject, to be deluded by a desire to render easy, and to simplify, what is of necessity difficult and complicated. Moral considerations come in aid of the warmest and best sentiments of the human mind to entice us to innovation; we feel ourselves almost the sharers of that crime and misrule which we think our interference could mitigate or amend; and, in the fervour of our virtue, we are too apt to forget, that temporary or partial benefit often entails lasting and general evil,—that every plan, however theoretically good, must be

practically bad, that is imperfectly executed. We forget, in the pride of our superior knowledge, the condition of others; and self-gratification makes almost every man desire to crowd into the few years of his official career the work of half a century. Thus measures have been, and continue to be, brought forward "in advance of the community" for whose benefit they are intended. Of what has passed, it is not necessary to speak: the future is in our power, and I cannot conclude this part of the subject, which relates to an interference that is calculated, according as it is managed, to hasten or retard the introduction of our direct rule, without impressing upon every officer employed under my orders the importance of a conduct calculated to preserve, while it improves, the established governments and Native authorities of the country. To these it is his duty to give such impulse as he can, without injuring their frame, towards an amendment suited to their situation, to the character of the rulers, and to that of the various classes under their rule. I consider, and the opinion is the result of both experience and reflection, that all dangers to our power in India are slight in comparison with

those which are likely to ensue from our too zealous efforts to change the condition of its inhabitants, with whom we are yet, in my opinion, but very imperfectly acquainted. A person who entertains such sentiments as I do on this question, must appear the advocate of very slow reform; but if I am so, it is from a full conviction that any thing like precipitation in our endeavours at improvement is likely to terminate in casting back those we desire to advance: on the contrary, if instead of overmarching, we are content to go along with this immense population, and to be in good temper with their prejudices, their religion, and usages, we must gradually win them to better ways of thinking and of acting. The latter process, no doubt, must be one of great time; but its success will be retarded by every hasty step.

There are few points on which more care is required than the selection and employment of Native servants for the public service. The higher classes of these, such as Moonshees,* Mootsuddies,† and Writers, should be men of regular habits of life, intelligent, and of good characters in their

* Moonshee—Mahomedan secretary or writer.

† Mootsuddee—Hindu writer.

own tribes. There is no objection to an officer continuing to keep in service a person he has brought from a distant province, who has been long with him, and on whose fidelity and competence he can repose; but, generally speaking, it is much better to entertain respectable Natives or old residents of the country in which he is employed; such may have looser habits and be less attached, but the former his vigilance will check and correct, and attachment will soon be created by kindness and consideration. Their advantages over foreigners are very numerous. The principal are, their acquaintance with the petty interests of the country, and their knowledge of all the prejudices and the jealousies of the different classes of the community to which they belong. On all these points the superior should be minutely informed, and, if he employs men not personally acquainted with the disposition and condition of those under his charge or control, his information on such subjects must come through multiplied mediums, which is in itself a serious evil. But, independent of this, the employment of the Natives of a distant province is always unpopular, and they are generally viewed

with dislike and suspicion by the higher and more respectable classes of the country into which they are introduced. This excites a feeling in the minds of the former, which either makes them keep aloof from all connexion with the inhabitants, or seek the society, and use as instruments, men who are discontented or of indifferent character. It is difficult to say which of these causes has the worst effect. The one gives an impression of pride, if not contempt, and the other of design and an inclination to intrigue; and both operate unfavourably to the local reputation of the master.

I have observed, that the Natives who are least informed of the principles of our rule, are ready to grant respect and confidence to an English officer, which they refuse to persons of their own tribe; but they are apt to form an unfavourable opinion of his disposition and character from any bad conduct of his Native servants, if foreigners: on the contrary, when the latter are members of their own community, the exposure of their errors or crimes, while it brings shame and conveys a salutary lesson to the class to which they belong, is attended with the effect of raising, instead of depressing, the

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European in their estimation. To all these general reasons might be added many, grounded on the particular condition of Central India. The oppression the inhabitants of this quarter have recently suffered, both from Hindu and Mahomedan Natives of the Deckan* and Hindustan,† makes them naturally alarmed at these classes. There is also, in the impoverished state of many of the best families of the country, a strong additional reason for our giving them, in preference to strangers, what little we can of salary as public servants.

In the above observations there is no desire to exclude any member of Deckan or Hindustan families, who have settled for life, or for several generations, in Malwa; such objection would proscribe from our employ some of the most intelligent and respectable inhabitants of that province.

* The term Deckan means South, and is given to the southern parts of India; but, in a limited sense, is now applied to the territories of the Nizam or Prince of Hydrabad, and to those above the mountains which formerly belonged to the Paishwah or head of the Poonah government.

† Hindustan, in its local and limited sense, comprehends the large and rich provinces which form the western parts of India, from Lucknow to the Punjab, and from the country of Rajpootana to the Himalaya mountains.

It has been before mentioned, that "publicity" in our transaction of business is most essential, chiefly as it puts at repose an alarmed and agitated population, and, beyond all, their princes and chiefs. We may greatly promote this object by the selection of servants. I early observed a very serious uneasiness, if not alarm, in Holkar's ministers, regarding the course I meant to pursue towards that court; and as one means of removing it, I chose as a principal Native writer an intelligent Brahmin, whose family was attached to that of Holkar, in whose employ I found him; and who could, I knew, from his connexions, have no permanent interests separate from his duty to that state. I was conscious of having nothing to conceal, but I knew the importance of Tantia Jogh* and others being satisfied that this was the case. No measure I have adopted has tended more to tranquillize their minds; and I state the fact, because its application may be suited to cases of daily occurrence.

In the employment of the higher classes

* Tantia Jogh, the Minister of the minor Prince Mulhar Row Holkar.

of Native servants, they should, as much as possible, be restricted to their specific duties, and no one should be allowed to take a lead, or mix (unless when directed) in the occupation of another. The keeping of these persons in their exact places will be found difficult, from the habits of the Natives being opposite to such rules; but it is essential: for errors, if not guilt, will be the certain consequence of a confusion of duties, which destroys that pride which good men feel from possessing confidence, and enables bad to evade that personal responsibility which constitutes the chief check upon their conduct.

The employment of the lower classes of public servants requires much attention. These should be selected on the same principles that have already been stated, with reference to the duties they are to perform, which ought always to be exactly defined, and their conduct vigilantly watched. It will indeed be found useful to render as public as possible the nature of their employment, and to call upon all local authorities to aid us in the prevention of those unauthorized and odious acts of injustice and oppression towards the inhabitants of the

country which this class will, in spite of all our efforts, find opportunities of committing.

I speak from the fullest experience when I state, that, though the Natives of India may do full justice to the purity of our intentions, and the excellence of the principles of our rule, they are undisguised in their sentiments regarding those parts of our administration in which the very dregs of their own community are employed. They cannot, indeed, but see with feelings of detestation and resentment a man raised from the lowest of their own ranks, and decorated with the official badge or stick of a civil or political English officer, become the very next moment insolent to persons to whom he and his family have been for ages submissive, or turn the extortioner of money from those tribes, among which he has before lived as an humble individual.

The power of this class of servants to injure our reputation is every where great, but more so in the proportion that the Natives of the country are ignorant of our real character, and where their dread of our power is excessive. Of the mischief they have done, or rather tried to do, in Malwa, I can speak from a perfect knowledge. I

have endeavoured with unremitting solicitude to counteract their impositions and oppressions, by publishing proclamations, and giving high rewards to all who informed against or seized any of my servants, when attempting the slightest interference in the country, or affecting to have any business beyond that of carrying a letter, or some specified or limited duty; but I have, nevertheless, been compelled within three years to punish publicly and discharge one Moonshee, two Mootsuddies or writers, three Jemadars*, and upwards of fifty Hircarrahs†; and almost an equal number of the same class belonging to other public officers have been taken and punished, or banished the country.

These examples will shew the danger of being tempted, by any convenience of service, or a desire to accelerate the accomplishment of our objects, to employ such instruments with any latitude of action.

The importance of encouraging the de-

* A Jemadar is the head or principal of the Hircarrahs.

† Hircarrah means literally "a man of all work," but is commonly applied, as in the text, to messengers who are distinguished by particular dresses, by bearing a stick or pike, and by wearing badges which denote the names of those by whom they are employed.

pendent states of India to do their own work, and to lean, on points of internal administration, as little as possible upon us, has been before noticed; and as long as we manage to keep clear of that species of interference which weakens and unsettles, without any proportionate good to balance its evil effects, we shall have credit in general opinion for all the good measures which the State under our protection adopts, and our reputation will be benefited (from the comparisons that are drawn) even by its acts of folly and injustice. But the latter advantage will be lost by any half and impolitic mixture in its concerns, and there is no mode in which this will be found so injurious as that of granting it the aid of Native servants in our employ. Allowing the higher classes of these to enter into the affairs of such governments in any shape, would be destructive of every principle that has been inculcated; but the giving their rulers, ministers, or local officers, the aid of lower servants, would be still more to the injury of our reputation; for among the higher classes we might find men of virtue and firmness of character beyond what could be expected from the others, when exposed,

as they would be, to such temptation. They would be used for purposes of coercion, if not oppression; and there would be sufficient art in those who thus employed them, to throw, when that was their object, the odium of what these instruments did, upon the English government. But, in general, their desire would be limited to have the aid of the British name to alarm into compliance with their demands, individuals or communities. They would be aware that the Hircarrah or servant sent to assist their authority was a check upon their proceedings, and this would lead to his being bribed; and, if he did not become an instrument of violence, it would only be because he received higher wages from the party he was sent to oppress. I have seen such manifold instances of the bad effects resulting from the employment of this class in the manner described, that I have for more than three years peremptorily refused any such aid to Native chiefs, and must require all those under my orders to do the same. The best answer to all applications upon this subject is, that compliance is at variance with the system ordered to be pursued; and that the usage of granting such aid, though it might

be found convenient, and in some cases accelerate the accomplishment of good measures, must in the end produce much evil, and be attended with loss of reputation to the British government, whose good name could not be intrusted to low agents and menials acting beyond the strict and vigilant observation of the European officer.

The right we have to act, when the public peace is threatened or disturbed, has been generally noticed under the head of interference; but it will be useful to say a few words on the mode of exercising that right, particularly as it relates to points which are connected with the internal administration of police and criminal justice.

In countries which have been long in the condition of Central India, there is a connexion formed between the most powerful and those who are apparently the most insignificant of the disturbers of the public peace, which will for some time require a vigilant attention to every act of the latter to prevent the revival of a disorderly or predatory spirit. In common cases we shall only have to prompt the local authority to exertions. But when our aid is required, and troops or any persons acting under our orders apprehend

delinquents, they should invariably be given over to the ruler or chief in whose countries the crimes were committed, by whom they will be examined, and punished according to established custom. I have usually limited my interference in this part of the administration of the Native States of Malwa to two points. The first is, that in cases of robbery, but particularly cattle (the common booty of Bheels and other plunderers), there should be restitution to the owners, the moment the property was proved; leaving those persons through whose hands it has passed, by real or pretended sales, to have their disputes and recriminations settled, and to recover from each other, according to usage. This practice is now general, and its enforcement for the last two years has done more to put an end to Bheel and other robberies than all the other measures that have been taken. The second point on which I have endeavoured to make a change in practice of the administration of justice in the Native States of Malwa, is that of preventing the crime of wilful murder being commuted for the payment of a pecuniary fine; but in all cases of this nature, where circumstances compel

us to interfere, it is desirable that no execution should take place till guilt has been clearly proved. The observance of this rule is more necessary, as in cases where the criminals are of a plundering tribe, such as Bheels and Baugries*, the Native ruler or chief will be disposed to deem the mere accusation enough to warrant the punishment; whereas, it is exactly with such classes that it is of importance to us to be more particular, lest we lose the impression we desire to make upon them, by becoming in any way accessaries to acts of violence or injury.

On all occasions when the local power is sufficient, it is most desirable to bring it into action, that it may cease to be dependent upon us for the maintenance of the internal peace. This is particularly advisable where excesses are committed, that have, either as their real or professed causes, superstitious or religious feelings. In such cases, except where the mixture of political motives is manifest and avowed, or the danger imminent, we should call upon the Native government, by its duty and allegiance to the paramount state, to put down all dis-

* Baugries, a tribe of robbers.—Vide *Memoir on Central India*, vol. ii. p. 182.

turbers of the peace, particularly when fanatics, like those at Pertaulgurh*, combine with their atrocities the avowal of sentiments hostile to our rule. The actual condition of Central India makes it likely that such efforts as those above alluded to may be repeated, and they will always (however contemptible they may seem) require to be treated with much delicacy. It should be deemed a guiding principle not to act, if we can avoid it; and when absolutely compelled to do so, it is essential that we should appear, not as principals, but in support of the local government: for the spirit that engenders such excesses, whether they proceed from intrigue or fanaticism, will only attain strength by opposition; and any violent measures on our part, however justified by crime or outrage, might make the most unfavourable impressions upon an ignorant and bigoted population, who, while they confess all the benefits of our general rule and control,

* The name of a town, which is the capital of a small principality. The fanatics here alluded to, under the direction of a female who declared herself an incarnation of one of the gods, committed several murders; and while these were perpetrating, she exhibited to her superstitious followers a mirror, in which was reflected the triumph of the Rajpoots and the defeat of the English.

are easily excited to a dread of our success, ultimately leading to attempts at changing the religion and institutions of their forefathers.

In cases of rebels or plunderers collecting in such force as to require British troops to suppress them, you will (if the emergency prevents reference to superior authority) make a requisition for aid from the nearest commanding officer that can furnish it.

The rules for such requisitions have been generally notified: the political agent will give the fullest information of the service to be performed, the nature of the country, the character of the enemy and his resources, leaving the military officer, when possessed of such knowledge, the selection of the force, both as to number and equipment, that is to be placed at his disposal. But it is to be strongly impressed upon both, that in a country like Central India, the means employed should always be above the object to be accomplished, as failure or defeat in any enterprise or action would be attended with very bad consequences.

It is almost superfluous to repeat what has been sedulously inculcated upon you as a primary duty during the last three years, the

adoption of every preventive measure to avert the necessity of the employment of force. Its appearance has hitherto been almost in all cases sufficient to produce the required effect; and in the few instances where it has been employed, the moment of success has been succeeded by that of conciliation. To act differently, and to pursue those wild tribes who are the common disturbers of the peace with retaliation of outrages beyond what is necessary to evince our power, is to confirm them in their habits, and to add to their other motives of hostility those of resentment and despair. When engaged in warfare with such classes, we should be cautious how we inflict summary punishment on the individuals who fall into our power. These are often the mere instruments of crime, and act in its commission under as strong an impulse of duty to their superiors as the soldier in our ranks; and it is as unreasonable to expect their habits can be changed by making examples of such men, as it would that we could subdue the spirit of a nation by putting to death every soldier belonging to it that we found fighting against us in action. The increased danger in which this placed individuals, would only strengthen that power-

ful feeling by which they were attached to their leaders, while it added that of revenge against those who treated them with what they deemed cruelty and injustice. It is the duty of all agents of the British government to direct their efforts to effect a change in the frame of these savage communities; instead of commencing, in imitation of unprincipled and despotic Native rulers, an unprofitable and interminable warfare upon individuals, who can hardly be termed guilty when they act by the express order of chiefs to whom and their predecessors they and their fathers have given implicit obedience for centuries. The nature and strength of the ties which subsist in these societies were fully discovered in the trial of Nadir Singh,* the celebrated Bheelalah chief of the Vindhya range. No one has questioned the justice of his punishment; but that of the persons who committed by his order the barbarous crime for which he was exiled, would have been deemed an act of oppression.

One of the most effectual means that you have to maintain the peace, is that of exerting yourself to render all (even the poorest

* For a particular account of this remarkable chief of robbers, vide *Memoir of Central India*, vol. i. p. 550.

and wildest classes) sensible of the benefits they derive from your protection. There is no point in which this is more required, than against the excesses of our troops, camp followers, merchants who have passes, and, in short, all who on any ground use the British name. The governments of the different presidencies have been long sensible of this evil, and have endeavoured, by the strictest orders and proclamations, to correct it. The pressing of begaries* and hackeries† has been positively forbidden; but these orders must be enforced with a rigorous and uncompromising spirit by the civil and political authorities, otherwise they will prove unavailing. This is a point of duty in which I consider those under my orders to have no option or latitude. In the present condition of Central India, it is one of too much importance, both as it relates to the temper of the inhabitants and the reviving prosperity of the country, to warrant any deviation, either for the accommodation of individuals or the public service. The former, when no longer encouraged by improper or

* Begaries are a class of Natives of low tribe, whose occupation is labour.

† Hackeries are a species of carts.

unwise indulgence to trust in any way to the country, will soon learn to be independent of its aid; public departments will in like degree become, from providing for their own wants, more efficient; and when the inhabitants are satisfied that it is not in the power of any person, whatever be his rank, to press them or their cattle, they will be inspired with a confidence that will lead to their furnishing more resources to troops and travellers, from a desire of profit, than has ever yet been extorted by an oppressive system; which, according to all Natives I have heard speak upon the subject, has been carried to as great, if not greater lengths, in countries subject to our rule and control, than in the worst of their own governments.

There are, I fear, many omissions in these notes of Instructions; but an anxiety to render them complete has already made them far longer than was at first intended. One of my chief objects has been to impress, in the most forcible manner, the great benefits which are to be expected from a kind and conciliating manner, and a constant friendly intercourse with those under your direction and control. It is the feelings and know-

ledge which such habits on your part will inspire, that can alone give effect to the principles of action that have been prescribed for your observance. You are called upon to perform no easy task: to possess power, but seldom to exercise it; to witness abuses which you think you could correct; to see the errors, if not crimes, of superstitious bigotry, and the miseries of misrule, and yet forbear, lest you injure interests far greater than any within the sphere of your limited duties, and impede and embarrass, by a rash change and innovation that may bring local benefit, the slow but certain march of general improvement. Nothing can keep you right on all these points but constant efforts to add to your knowledge, and accustoming your mind (as I have before urged you) to dwell upon the character of the British power in India, and that of the empire over which it is established. The latter, comprehending numerous tribes and nations, with all their various institutions and governments, may truly, though metaphorically, be viewed as a vast and ancient fabric, neither without shape nor beauty, but of which many parts are in a dilapidated state, and all more or less soiled or decayed;

still it is a whole, and connected in all its parts; the foundations are deep-laid, and to the very summit arch rests upon arch. We are now its possessors; and if we desire to preserve, while we improve it, we must make ourselves completely masters of the frame of the structure to its minutest ornaments and defects: nor must we remove the smallest stone till another is ready, suited to fill the vacant niche, otherwise we may inadvertently bring a ruin on our own heads, and those of others, on the spot where we too eagerly sought to erect a monument of glory.

JOHN MALCOLM.

Camp Dhooliah,
28th June 1821.

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